

News Release



Controller of the State of California - Kathleen Connell

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STATE CONTROLLER KATHLEEN CONNELL ANNOUNCES
THE ARREST OF A STATE EMPLOYEE
IN \$250,000 FRAUD CASE**

HIGH TECH CRIME TASK FORCE AND FEDERAL AGENTS AID IN INTERSTATE INVESTIGATION

SACRAMENTO, February 2, 2001 – State Controller Kathleen Connell's office arrested a Cal-Trans employee today on charges of fraud and mail fraud. The case involves an illegal invoice submitted for payment to a fictitious person. Investigators for the Controller's office determined a Cal-Trans employee had manufactured the invoice to defraud the State of \$250,000.

The crimes were described as "bold and contemptible" by State Controller Kathleen Connell. "Someone who would attempt to steal money from the State of California, in an inside job, should know that a massive fraud like this would ultimately be discovered," Connell said.

After the invoice was processed red flags lead the Controller to dispatch her own investigators and enlist support of major law enforcement agencies. The United State Postal Service Inspectors Office helped to trace the transaction. Agents from the United States Secret Service were crucial in carrying out an investigation that crossed state lines into Oregon. The State Controller's Office is a member of the Sacramento Valley High Tech Crimes Task Force, which also played a key role in tracking the fraudulent documents to the source.

State Controller Kathleen Connell praised the work of law enforcement in solving this case quickly. "We are lucky to have had the support of the Federal Government, and Sacramento's High Tech Crimes Task force, which was an essential part of this investigation," Connell said. "The quick action of the Sacramento Valley High Tech Crimes Task Force, which includes the Controller's Office, the Postal Service and the Secret Service, helped us get an arrest in this case as soon as possible," she said.

Investigators found the employee, Chris Ubah, aka Christian Uba, had created a fictitious identity and a bank account under the name James McKenny. He created a fake invoice and passed it through the system via his place of employment, Cal-Trans. A warrant was mailed to the Oregon bank and deposited into the fictitious account.

- More -

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The specific charges include mail fraud and access device fraud. Based on the complicated nature of this case, additional charges may be filed. The U.S. Attorney's office will prosecute the case. An arraignment has not yet been set. Ubah is being held without bail.

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